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Letter dated 18 June 2015 from the Permanent Representative of Australia to the United Nations addressed to the President of the Security Council

I have the honour to inform you that, on 11 and 12 June 2015, ministers and officials from 24 countries, the European Union and the United Nations, as well as representatives from civil society and the private sector, met in Sydney for a two-day regional summit to counter violent extremism.

Consistent with Security Council resolution 2178 (2014) to enhance cooperation and support each other's efforts to counter violent extremism, ministers agreed to ongoing actions to build international cooperation ahead of a meeting planned for the margins of the General Assembly in September 2015 and at the leaders' level, on countering violent extremism.

In that context, I would be grateful if you could circulate the present letter and the attached official statement of the ministerial component of the summit as a document of the Security Council.

(*Signed*) Gillian **Bird**

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Annex to the letter dated 18 June 2015 from the Permanent Representative of Australia to the United Nations addressed to the President of the Security Council

Official statement of the ministerial meeting, held in Sydney, Australia, on 12 June 2015

Ministers and officials from 24 countries, the European Union and the United Nations, as well as representatives from civil society and the private sector, met today in Sydney, Australia, for the ministerial component of a two-day regional summit to counter violent extremism. The summit built on work commenced at the February 2015 White House summit to counter violent extremism and furthered at the April 2015 East Asia Summit Symposium on Religious Rehabilitation and Social Reintegration, held in Singapore. The Sydney summit aimed to improve regional coordination and build the capacity of Governments, civil society and local communities to challenge violent extremism in order to prevent terrorism.

In addition to facilitating the exchange of models of good practice and building networks, the Summit delivered practical training and capacity-building workshops for both government and civil society participants. Those included working with social media, building community-led rehabilitation and early intervention programmes, and developing inclusive national strategies to counter violent extremism.

Consistent with Security Council resolution 2178 (2014) to enhance cooperation and support each other's efforts to counter violent extremism, ministers agreed to ongoing actions to build international cooperation and collaboration ahead of a meeting planned for the margins of the United Nations General Assembly in September 2015 and at the leaders' level, on countering violent extremism.

In their discussions, participant countries addressed and reinforced their commitment to five key themes.

Regional and international cooperation

- Noted the significant and enduring threat posed by the recruitment of foreign fighters by terrorist organizations and the evolving threat of domestic radicalization to violence of vulnerable individuals, particularly young people
- Underlined that there is no more pressing matter of national and regional security than reducing the threat of terrorism, and committed to counter all forms of terrorism and violent extremism
- Stressed that terrorism and violent extremism cannot and should not be associated with any religion, nationality or civilization
- Recognized that countering violent extremism strategies needs to be holistic, from addressing the underlying conditions conducive to the growth and spread of violent extremism and building community resilience to radicalization, through education and support, to early intervention and rehabilitation programmes, and implementing appropriate legal regimes and codes of conduct, consistent with ensuring respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms
- Underscored that responding to the threat of terrorist groups exploiting the Internet to recruit and radicalize vulnerable individuals requires action by all tiers of government, together with civil society and the private sector

- Reaffirmed their commitment to working cooperatively to support each other's efforts to counter violent extremism, including through information-sharing, capacity-building, coordination of efforts, and sharing lessons learned
- Welcomed the efforts of global and regional organizations to facilitate capacity-building and networking to assist countries to counter the threats of terrorism and violent extremism, and committed to ensuring that regional efforts complement work already under way by organizations including the United Nations, the Global Counterterrorism Forum, Hedayah, the Global Community Engagement and Resilience Fund, and the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) and ASEAN-led processes including the East Asia Summit and the ASEAN Regional Forum

Research and information-sharing

- Committed to work with and through key bodies such as the Global Counterterrorism Forum, Hedayah, the United Nations Counter-Terrorism Implementation Taskforce, and the United Nations Security Council Counter-Terrorism Committee and its Executive Directorate to collect and disseminate local, national, regional and global experiences in order to identify good practices that effectively address violent extremism to be considered during the next session of the General Assembly together with the plan of action developed by the Secretary-General
- Underlined that the importance of understanding the reasons why people join violent extremist movements has never been more pressing, and that understanding the process of radicalization is critical to responding to all facets of terrorism and violent extremism
- Noted the responsibility on Governments to support and share local and regional research and expertise drawn from the public and private sectors to contribute to a greater collective understanding of the appeal of terrorist narratives and how they are driving radicalization to violence

Strengthening the role of civil society to contribute to strategic communications

- Underscored that effectively preventing the spread of violent extremism includes empowering those who are best placed to facilitate change, including youth, women, families, religious, cultural and education leaders and community groups
- Acknowledged that effective strategies to counter the threat of online radicalization require Governments to act beyond legislative and law enforcement measures to engage with the community in partnership with industry to promote positive messaging and counter misleading and harmful terrorist narratives
- Noted that the private sector, particularly the media and technology sectors, has a range of tools and resources that can support government and civil society to build resilience to radicalization to violence
- Undertook to seek opportunities to partner with civil society and the private sector to deliver tailored counter-messages, delivered by credible voices, including persons formerly involved in violent extremism, and aligned with government policies to suppress violent extremist rhetoric and counter violent extremism

Supporting vulnerable communities

- Recognized that development entities and the private sector make an important contribution to addressing the underlying conditions conducive to the spread of violent extremism, including through providing employment opportunities, building youth vocational and technical capacities, and encouraging entrepreneurship
- Noted that young members of vulnerable communities have been actively targeted by terrorist groups and agreed that a focused effort needs to be made to discourage and prevent youth from embracing violent extremism
- Noted the importance of empowering families and communities through education and engagement to recognize early warning signs that someone may be radicalizing to violence and how to act

Strengthening community-police relations

- Underscored that positive and trusting relationships between police and the community are a foundation for assisting in the identification and diversion of vulnerable individuals from radicalization to violence, and
- Recognized that counter-terrorism operations and misinformed public debate on legislative and law enforcement responses to domestic radicalization can be perceived negatively by some community groups, eroding police relationships with the community, and agreed that proactive and transparent communication efforts should be engaged to minimize these unintended consequences.

Summit outcomes

Ministers and heads of delegation recognized that the following Summit outcomes will support a regional approach to countering violent extremism and will inform contributions to the meeting, at the leaders' level, in the margins of the General Assembly in September 2015:

- Establish a regional network of civil society groups to foster peer-to-peer learning and partnerships, including with the private sector, and assist with identifying and better utilizing leaders and influencers across the region to reach target audiences
- Develop a regional guide for government and civil society on effective engagement with the private sector, to facilitate closer collaboration on countering violent extremism
- Create a regional best practice guide for the development of non-legislative, legislative and law enforcement responses to inhibit the dissemination of terrorist propaganda
- Develop a compendium of regional counter-narratives to amplify effective messages across the region
- Invest in enhancing the role of communities to challenge terrorist propaganda, including by building the technical capability of grass-roots organizations to elevate non-extremist voices that resonate with target audiences